

Members

Rep. Dennis Avery, Chairperson  
Rep. Carolene Mays  
Rep. David Cheatham  
Rep. Thomas Knollman  
Rep. Suzanne Crouch  
Rep. Jackie Walorski  
Sen. Vaneta Becker, Vice-Chairperson  
Sen. John Waterman  
Sen. Michael Delph  
Sen. Connie Sipes  
Sen. Glenn Howard  
Sen. Timothy Skinner



# INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE ON MISSING CHILDREN

LSA Staff:

K.C. Norwalk, Attorney for the Committee  
David Lusan, Fiscal Analyst for the Committee

Authority: P.L. 96-2007 (Established by HEA 1726-2007)

*Legislative Services Agency*  
**200 West Washington Street, Suite 301**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789**  
**Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554**

## MEETING MINUTES<sup>1</sup>

**Meeting Date:** October 22, 2007  
**Meeting Time:** 1:00 P.M.  
**Meeting Place:** State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 404  
**Meeting City:** Indianapolis, Indiana  
**Meeting Number:** 4

**Members Present:** Rep. Dennis Avery, Chairperson; Rep. David Cheatham; Rep. Thomas Knollman; Sen. Vaneta Becker, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. John Waterman; Sen. Connie Sipes.

**Members Absent:** Rep. Carolene Mays; Rep. Suzanne Crouch; Rep. Jackie Walorski; Sen. Michael Delph; Sen. Timothy Skinner; Sen. Glenn Howard.

### Call to Order

Representative Dennis Avery, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:25 P.M. and the members of the Committee introduced themselves.

### Eric Wright, Director of the Center for Health Policy, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, IUPUI

Mr. Wright presented the Committee with a study on counting the homeless in Indianapolis (see Exhibit 1). Mr. Wright discussed the difficulties of obtaining an accurate count of the homeless. He noted that most homeless counts are conducted by volunteers and not all

---

<sup>1</sup> Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

homeless counts employ the same set of counting procedures. Mr. Wright also explained that homeless youth are very hard to count because homeless youth do not congregate in the same areas as homeless adults and a large percentage of homeless youth seem to live with friends. In the Indianapolis homeless count conducted in January 2007, only nine youth were counted, and Mr. Wright believes there should have been approximately 156 homeless youth counted.

Mr. Wright also discussed the cost of homelessness on society. Mr. Wright estimated that adult homelessness annually costs the public healthcare system in Indiana between \$3 million dollars and \$7.8 million dollars.

### **Patty Avery, Evansville-Vanderburgh County Homeless Youth Council**

Ms. Avery introduced herself to the Committee, presented the Committee with a written copy of her testimony (see Exhibit 2), and explained that she is the co-chairperson of the Evansville-Vanderburgh County Homeless Youth Council (Council). Ms. Avery stated the Council suggested the formation of the Committee because: (1) there is a lack of statewide data on homelessness; (2) the current structure of homeless services in Indiana restricts different approaches to homeless services from being implemented; and (3) there should be a coordinated and multi-faceted approach to combat youth homelessness. Ms. Avery further recommended that a study be conducted on how other states combat youth homelessness in order to identify programs that could be successful in Indiana.

Ms. Avery indicated that the majority of homeless youth are homeless due to a family conflict, placement in foster care, or being convicted of a crime.

Representative Knollman asked Ms. Avery to compare her experience working with homeless youth in Brazil with her experience working with homeless youth in Evansville. Ms. Avery stated that many homeless youth in Brazil are infected with HIV and, unfortunately, HIV infections are becoming a problem with homeless youth in Indiana.

Representative Cheatham asked Ms. Avery about her thoughts on developing an alternative educational system for homeless youth. Ms. Avery responded that school corporations with McKinney-Vento grants have the capability of providing educational programs for homeless students. Ms. Avery also stated that school corporations could help count homeless youth.

### **Potential Legislation**

K.C. Norwalk, the attorney for the Committee, described the following preliminary drafts that the Committee may consider at the final meeting:

#### **PD 3228 (Twenty-first century scholars with GED diplomas)**

Provides that a student who would otherwise qualify for a twenty-first century scholarship is not disqualified as a scholarship recipient if the student has: (1) withdrawn from school due to financial hardship, illness, or a court order; and (2) obtained a general educational development diploma.

#### **PD 3239 (Parental Notification of Shelter Services to a Child)**

Provides that an emergency shelter or shelter care facility that receives a runaway child shall: (1) notify the child's parent, guardian, or custodian of the child's location not later than 72 hours after receiving the child; and (2) notify the department of child services if the child alleges that the child is the subject of abuse or neglect.

#### **PD 3240 (Shelter Services to an Emancipated Child)**

Provides that an emergency shelter or shelter care facility is not required to notify an

emancipated minor's parent, guardian, or custodian if the emancipated minor receives or attempts to receive any services from an emergency shelter, a shelter care facility, or a homeless or low income program.

**PD 3247 (Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children)**

Requires the department of education to establish an office of coordinator for education of homeless children.

**PD 3255 (Sibling Visitation for Foster Youth)**

Requires the department of child services (DCS) to promote sibling visitation for every child who receives foster care. Allows a sibling to request sibling visitation if one of the siblings is receiving foster care. Requires DCS to allow sibling visitation if it is in the best interests of the child receiving foster care. Provides that if DCS denies a request for sibling visitation, an individual may petition a juvenile court for sibling visitation. Requires a court to grant sibling visitation if the court determines sibling visitation is in the best interests of the child who receives foster care. Permits a court to appoint a guardian ad litem or court appointed special advocate if a child requesting sibling visitation is receiving foster care. Provides that a guardian ad litem or court appointed special advocate appointed in a sibling visitation case is immune from civil liability, except for gross misconduct.

**PD 3266 (Tutoring for Foster Youth and Homeless Youth)**

Requires each school corporation to provide tutoring and mentoring for a child who is in foster care or is homeless.

**PD 3267 (School Liaisons for Homeless Children)**

Requires each school corporation to: (1) appoint a liaison for homeless children (liaison); and (2) report to the department of education the contact information for the liaison. Requires each school corporation that has an Internet web site to publish on the web site the contact information for the liaison. Relocates a chapter concerning the transportation of homeless students to a new article concerning homeless children.

**PD 3274 (School Transportation for Foster Youth)**

Requires a school corporation to transport a student in foster care to and from the school in which the student was enrolled before receiving foster care.

**PDOC (Facilitation of Homeless Services Information and Homeless Count)**

Requires the Indiana housing and community development authority (authority) to: (1) oversee and encourage a regional homeless delivery system; (2) facilitate the dissemination of information to assist individuals and families with accessing local resources, programs, and services related to homelessness, housing, and community development; and (3) determine the number of homeless individuals, including homeless children, in Indiana. Extends the authority's power to coordinate and establish linkages between governmental and social services program to include individuals or families facing or experiencing homelessness.

**PDOC (Shelter Services for Foster Youth)**

Provides that an individual who is at least 16 and less than 18 years of age or an unattached youth may receive services or items directly related to providing shelter for homeless or low income individuals without the approval of a parent, guardian, or custodian.

**Next Meeting**

Representative Avery announced that the final meeting of the Committee will take place on October 31, 2007, at 1:00 P.M., in room 404 of the State House.